Woes of Wayward Travelers

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Summary: FE:A self-insert. Another hapless college student gets dragged into Ylisse and falls in with the Shepherds with the usual goals of Don't Die, and Get Back Home. And if knowledge is power, then I'm going to call BS because knowing when and how people are going to die and not having the capabilities to do anything about it is mind-crushing!

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

So I've given into my urge and jumped onto the bandwagon. Yeah, I got inspired by System Restoration, Daydreams and Nightmares, and Asleep, which are the best SI fics I've seen so far. If you haven't read them: go read them. If you have, then great!

I'm both proud and ashamed about this. I'm proud that I broke my usual word count of below 2000 words, but I'm ashamed that it took me trying my hand at a SI to have me do it. I'm not expecting this to be as amazing as the fics mentioned above, but I'm hoping it's entertaining at the most.

sigh Time to face the music.

I don't own FE:A it belongs to Intelligent Systems and Nintendo. All of the references here also belong to their respective owners.

Why me?

Just… why?

That is a thought that runs through my head as I roll over in my bed once more. Seriously, why did I have to be such a light sleeper? I knew moving into a dorm meant having to deal with noise at night, but come on! We have an established "quiet hours" people, or did you all forget that we are supposed to quiet down AFTER MIDNIGHT?! (Why was this time chosen again? Oh yeah, majority vote won. Damn it.) I grumble to myself but don't get up because I'm too exhausted and my bed is warm and I just do not want to leave.

Why can't they just make a lot of noise and party on Friday nights?

I resign myself to lying in bed and waiting for my mind to shut down and go into the REM sleep I need so I can be fully rested for tomorrow. It feels like an eternity before I fall into that deep sleep state where time seems to fly by and then you wake up to a nice alarm clock playing country music. Man, I wish I knew which channel was the rock station…

Right, so I was finally in that heavy state where I would be having some kind of dream orchestrated by my over-reactive imagination, usually of ideas I kept spinning in my head during the day. I'm a lucid dreamer too, so my nightmares don't become nightmares unless my mind is feeling that my own personal movie theatre needs a little bit of fear on screen. Hahaha, my mind is a terrifying place sometimes. Not that I really remember what happens half the time, it all goes by so fast. They usually revolve around characters of mine and I'm the "camera" so to speak. This dream, however, ended up not becoming a dream.

It started put simply enough. The darkness flashes between colored images I'm conjuring up that are seeable and not and blah, blah, blah. There's a voice whispering to who I believe is the main character of this dream and the main character says something back. When the wind starts whistling, I write it off as just it getting windy outside of the dorm. It was only when I felt the wind hitting my face that my sleep-addled mind started to jerk back awake.

Was the window open? No, that couldn't be right; the windows were closed now that it was getting colder. A part of my mind thought that this would become one of those dreams where I'd be so deep in and I wouldn't wake up until the alarm went off. Kinda like that nightmare-dream where I was living in a house and a mummy was my caretaker, tucking me into bed and staying to keep the monsters in the dark away. Thank you Courage the Cowardly Dog for spawning that odd little creation. I'm getting off topic, aren't I?

I manage to open my eyes so that I'm squinting and I feel my chest seize up. This was also the moment I noticed I was hanging precariously over a cliff edge, my upper half dangling while my lower half was flat on the ground behind me. And I was slipping forward now because I was tensed up and all my weight decided to go to my head. I didn't start screaming until that precise moment that my body lost all friction keeping it on a solid surface, and even then it was just a short, "Aah!"

Yeah, I froze up so badly I can't even scream in fear of my imminent demise properly. But that didn't matter because the deus ex machina decided to kick in and save me by flying out and catching me on its back. My hands are quick to wildly grope around for something latch onto while I'm in full panic mode. This, by the way, is the worst kind of mode a person can be in when they are in a life threatening situation. I regress into shaking like a leaf while gripping the rough surface of the thing that was now carrying me to a place I don't know of.

When we finally hit solid ground it takes me a while to regain my bearings and I'm still shaking. I think I might be going into shock too—that's not good. I have to remind myself to breathe and I'm nearly hyperventilating.

"Agh… ngh…" I start sniffling and begin to choke up from the experience. Could anyone really blame me though? I almost died after waking up in a place that was definitely not my room. Though the last part was something I didn't get to think about until I had managed to calm back down. When I can finally think straight once more and my tears stop flowing I'm able to see what it was that had caught me. The sun was peeking up over the horizon, giving me light to work with. What I see are ridges and what looks suspiciously like a giant lizard head.

"Wha-?" I slide off, my bare feet touching wet grass and I shakily circle to the front. I stop right in front of it and take everything in. It then finally hits me what I'm looking at and I blink dumbly, those yellow reptilian eyes staring back right at me.

"A dra-wyvern! A wyvern!" Whoops, almost messed up. Dragons have four legs (or none at all), wyverns are like bats. The wyvern snorts in my face as if to say, "Well no duh," and I gag from the sudden face full of steam. Eww…. I wipe my face off (oh, hey, I'm still in my PJs) and give the wyvern a dirty look; thanks, buddy. A low rumbling noise comes from its throat. I think it's laughing at me. Great. I probably should be freaking out over the fact that a creature of myth is standing right in front of me, but my adrenaline rush has left me completely drained and now my head is spinning. Gravity kicks in and I fall on the wet ground like a marionette with its strings cut.

Yeagh! The ground's cold and drenching my clothes, but I'm too exhausted to move and get back up. Dang it, where am I? That's the last coherent thought I have before I'm out like a light once more.

Waking up, I found myself staring at a wooden wall and feeling incredibly stiff. I stretch my legs out as much as I can and pull myself out of the bed I was in. A patchy quilt falls to the ground from my movements and I pick it up out of habit. I roughly wave it up and down to straighten it out before putting it back on the bed, smoothing it out until it at least looked presentable. I've had the "make your bed" schtick beaten into my head so many times that now it's just a reflex for me. It's about that time that I realized that my eyesight wasn't blurry like it should be. I can actually see things clearly and my glasses are nowhere in sight, nor are my contacts in my eyes.

The door suddenly opens and I jump, not expecting the sudden noise. I turn around to see a portly middle-aged woman sporting a plain tawny dress with a white apron over it, "Oh, you're awake now, young miss?"

Young miss… I have never been called that before so it's a bit strange. Not only that, my paranoia was slowly rising when I noticed that she was wearing clothing one would usually see on Fantasy NPCs and this cottage(it was a cottage right?) matched as well. I stare at her like a deer in headlights and awkwardly shift on my feet. I look down at the ground while trying to find the words I needed, "Um… could you... where am I?"

Of all the times for my-less-than-stellar eloquence to screw me over. Thankfully, the woman seemed to understand what I was trying to get across, "You're in our home, young miss. My husband and son found you collapsed outside when they went to till the field."

Oh.

"Still, that wyvern of yours gave us all a fright. Poor Donnel was screaming loud enough to wake the dead."

Donnel? That sounded familiar—wait…

…

"NO WAY!" My outburst scared the woman in front of me, but I started pacing and fiddling with my hair, a nervous tick of mine.

"Young miss?"

Oh crap, that's right she's still there. I turn back to her, "Mm?"

"Is everything all right?"

"Y-yeah. Um… where is my…my wyvern?"

"Out by the well."

I hurriedly move past her and towards what I believe to be the front door. It opens; nearly hitting me in my face and making me back up before once again pushing past the person before me.

"Sorry," I mumble to the man and keep on running. My bare feet hit the grass and I slow down enough to take a look around. There's nothing but green hills and a few scattered trees with fences, a huge dirt road, and a small village close

by. Sure enough, the wyvern was where Donnel's mother said he was. He (I'm going to be calling it he until I'm told otherwise) was just crouched there, still as a statue save for the occasional twitch of his tail. The wyvern is big, no surprise there, and his scales are a dark blue that is almost black in shade. His head moved slightly when I came into view and he stretched his neck out as I came closer. I reach my hand out on put it on his snout, the scales feeling surprisingly smooth. My breath comes out short and harsh and I can feel myself nearly smiling in a manic manner, "This is such… such a messed up dream."

Except this wasn't a dream. I was, even though it should've been absolutely impossible, inside of a video game; Fire Emblem Awakening to be more specific. And suddenly the question: "Wouldn't it be great if such and such was real?" comes back to haunt me.

"Why here?" I mumble myself, "Why not the Pokemon world instead?"

At least there I wouldn't have to worry about undead zombies, bandits, psychopathic zealots, and a Lovecraftian-esque menace trying to destroy all of humanity. Not that that piece of childhood doesn't have its own issues but at least it is much more manageable. I groan and rub my face, cycling through my thoughts really quick.

This was ridiculous. This happened only in Fantasy stories. This happened in self-insert fanfics, which almost by default are usually bad. Heck, this happened in the Mystery Dungeon games! And my life has now become one of them. Who did I piss off? Seriously, please tell me so I can give my most heartfelt apologies so I can go back and get ready for class. I end hugging the wyvern's head and leaning my face against his like I did sometimes with my dog. He moves, dislodging himself from me and bumps his face against mine.

"Ow," I say out of reflex rather than intense pain. There had been pressure but it wasn't exactly painful. He rubs the right side of my face twice before pulling away and I wipe off the bits of scales that had stuck to my face. I reach over and pat his neck, "Thanks for saving me by the way."

"Rawr," I get a small roar in response, making me flinch a little. Okay, that was startling but I'll take that as a "you're welcome." I take the time to look over the wyvern ("I'm going to have to come up with a name if you really are going to stick around with me") I find no trace of a saddle, reins or halter. Huh, I was saved by a wild wyvern. Must be a consolation gift from the ROB that decided to drag me here while I was trying to sleep. I hear movement in the grass and I turn around to see Donnel and who I can only assume is his father. Wow, he actually looks different from all of the other generic villagers that the game showcased, being very muscular and having some facial hair. So that's where Donnel got his curly hair from.

"Is everything all right, young lady?"

I nod my head, "Yeah, yeah… thank you for, uh, picking me up off the ground."

Donnel's father nodded his head and I could see a bit of a smile there. Donnel is looking at my wyvern and gripping the farming hoe in his hands a little tightly. The wyvern snorts and lowers to the ground as if disinterested with the two farmers.

"Uh… So that wyvern of yer's is nice… right?" Donnel asks me. Being the kind of person to express more with my hands and body language, I shrug my shoulders, "I guess so. I only met him last night."

The wyvern snorts and bobs his head like I'd see horses do sometimes, though the effect wasn't as sassy(?) because he lacked a mane. I look around for a bit and decided to play the confused traveler.

"Where am I, exactly?" I ask Donnel's father. Come to think of it, this is an island village, right? Unless my memory is failing me that I can only remember the important events and not the fine details like where everything is on the map. I mean, Awakening was my first Fire Emblem game and I only got it out of curiosity and excitement for Shin Megami Tensei X Fire Emblem. Hey, if they can cross Pokemon and Nobunaga's Ambition and make it work, they can make that work too.

"This is the Farfort Village." Classy.

"Oh really?" I tilt my head a little to go with my question, and then straighten back out. It's at that moment that I finally pay attention to the hollow feeling in my stomach. Ah, yes, hunger. I breathe deeply, "Um… Is there anything I would be able to eat here? I… I don't have any money."

Only one set of clothes and my Meta knowledge of this world. Not that they needed to know that last part…

Luckily enough for me, Donnel's dad was very accommodating and he guided me back to the house where the mother

was preparing breakfast. I look down at the plate and see bacon and sunny-side eggs. I sat down with them at the table, though I was feeling increasingly awkward as the minutes went by. So I did what I did best and tried to block everything out and just focus on my food. There was a bump against the glass pane of a window and I could see the silhouette of the wyvern peeking in.

I'm going to have to find something for him to eat too.

"So," Donnel's mom is speaking to me and I turn my attention to her, "What's your name, young miss?"

I stare at her, and while my actual feelings may be entirely different she may have gotten an entirely different message from my current action. Stupid Meta messages. So I quickly go through a list of names I remember seeing and hearing(since I'd rather not use my real name in this situation), but me being super picky about names when coming up with characters causes me to take longer than I would've liked.

"Young miss?"

Crap, crap, crap, just pick one! I open my mouth and thoughtlessly blurt out, "Adrian!"

They look at me with the kind of look crazy people usually receive when they do their nonsensical antics or speak things that only make sense to themselves. Urgh, my face is starting to heat up and I can just imagine how embarrassed I must look right now.

"Isn't that a boy's name?" Donnel asks me.

"It's gender neutral." This is actually true. There are a lot of names that people associate with either boys only or girls only that are gender neutral like my real name, Ariel, Jaden, Jordan, etc. But enough about that, I'm kind of surprised I picked the name I had given to one of my male characters who I wrote to be a bit of a callous bastard. Then again, my friend really liked him—agh! Focus!

"Well, Adrian," Donnel's mother paused a little after saying my cover name. It seemed that she was having some trouble getting used to the idea of a girl having a traditionally masculine name, "What is a young woman like you doing all by her lonesome with a wyvern?"

Good question. I'm still trying to figure that out. But I have to give them an explanation so I go with tried and true "I'm a traveler who got a little lost and has nowhere to go" story that a lot of inter-dimensionally-displaced-students give to video game characters. When asked about my clothes, I had to go a bit further and say that before I met the wyvern I had been robbed of all my belongings save my only pair of clothes, and that I was foreigner.

Thankfully, they accepted the answer despite my clumsy trip ups when speaking. I hate being socially awkward sometimes.

"Yeesh, that must be rough," Donnel said in sympathy, "Having yer belongings plucked away from ya like that."

"Mm," I nod my head. But now that I had established a name and backstory for myself in this world what was I supposed to do now? I'm in a Paralogue after all or pre-Paralogue to be more precise and with an optional character's family to boot. There's no guarantee the Shepherds will even come here even though I always tried to get everyone. But that was me, this is different because I'm not in control and I know what's going to happen. Bandits will show up, Donnel's dad will do a brave thing that will ultimately result in his demise and the villagers will be taken hostage and Donnel will get away.

Maybe…

Possibly…

Argh, my head hurts; I really do wish this was all some kind of messed up dream.

Breakfast was finished up and I helped Donnel's mother (Who I finally learned the name of. Her name was Thelma) wash the dishes off. Donnel and his dad John (I had to resist an eyebrow raise here) went out to take care of their fields. Thelma was also kind enough to give me a spare dress and some other clothes for me to change into, taking my PJs out to be washed. Looking down at the peasant dress I was wearing now, I made a slight face and then shrugged to myself. It wasn't the worse thing I could've worn though I'd take pants any day.

So I go out to take care of my wyvern friend, carrying the small about of meat Thelma had supplied me with. He looked at me when I came up to him, "All right buddy, I have some meat for you-Ah!"

I backed away quickly when he shot at me eagerly. My heart pounded in my chest and I ended up dropping some of the meat to which he devoured with much gusto. In a frazzled state, I could only stare in silence as he ate the fallen meat, his tail wagging like a happy dog. It was both cute and terrifying at the same time. He sniffed the ground a bit more, his tongue snaking out to lick the blades of grass beneath him before he lifted his head up and came at me again.

"STOP, STOP!" My voiced cracked here but it got the job done regardless. The wyvern froze and I put my hand down from its "halt" action. It was weird that I could see the confusion and irritation in that scaly face, unless I was projecting too much. Then again, you don't own pets without at least learning how to read their moods at times, especially when they're begging for something. Thanks for that guys.

Holding the last bits of meat out to him, my hand palm-up and flat like I was taught to do when hand-feeding horses treats and such.; helped to not get fingers crushed between those huge teeth of theirs. Here though, the wyvern licked the meat off of my hand and gulped it down. I casually wiped the drool off on the skirt of my dress and a lightly patted the wyvern's head, "You happy now?"

He leaned into my hand so hard that I stumbled and gave a pleased growl. I slowly start to scratch his face and I swear that he's purring like my cat. That… I didn't realize wyverns could purr. Does this mean all draconians purred as well? Pushing my weirded-out thoughts aside I speak to him, "I'm going to have to give you a name, you know. I can't keep calling you "that wyvern."

Half-lidded reptilian eyes look at me in contented curiosity. Once again, I cycle through names though I remain fixated on two in particular.

Guilmon and Grani.

Yeah, I like Digimon. Tamers for the win all the way.

So now I came to a dilemma: did I want to call him Guilmon courtesy of how much of a glutton he was? Or did I want to call him Grani after the Norse hero Sigurd's horse? Decisions, decisions…

"Hmm. How about Grani?" I ask him. He nudges me in the chest and makes a warbling sound. Huh… I guess that's a yes then.

"All right then. Thanks for saving me last night, Grani."

He nudges me again and then tromps to a sunny patch of grass to stretch out. I went back to the house and spent the entire time pacing aimlessly and trying to think but coming up with blanks. The whole time I'm playing with my hair, a nervous tick I've never outgrown and my mom would affectionately call me Ms. Frizzle every time I did it.

Man… I was so looking forward to Thanksgiving too.

Sigh. I scratch my head and flop down onto the ground, my feet hurting from all the walking I did. I twist my upper body and feel my spine pop back into place, getting rid of the stiffness in my back. I end up lying flat on the ground and looking up at a cloudless blue sky with sunlight shining in my eyes. I screw them shut and just lay there soaking up the sun that I usually don't get, being a resident that one part of the US that's cloudy three quarters of the year and sunny the rest.

… Better not think about home right now.

I lay there for a while not moving, listening to my surroundings. Oddly enough, hearing the familiar chirp of a bird puts my mind a little more at ease. At some point I must've dozed off because I was being shaken awake, "Er, Adrian? Adrian, get up, the cows have gone home."

Cows? What cows? There aren't any cows in—oh, right, I'm in rural Ylisse. I sit up and rub my eyes, Donnel standing over me with his farming hoe resting over his shoulder. Apparently the sun was already going down and the air had begun to cool off.

I mumble a small "Thanks" and I get to my feet, brushing some grass off of the dress I was wearing. He and I both walk back into the house where Thelma was making dinner and John was waiting patiently at the table. The both of us sit down at the table to wait for the food to be served and the whole while I couldn't help but feel nervous and a little guilty. Here I am, being allowed to stay in this house and I feel like I haven't done anything to deserve it, other than by the virtue of being a lost traveler and I had lied about most of it.

My brief self-loathing episode ended when the plates were put before us and the food was served.

"Thank you," I say to Thelma in the most sincere and grateful tone I can muster. She smiles at me, "You are most

welcome, dear."

Why does it hurt to hear her say that?

After dinner ends, I insist on helping clean up the dishes to put my mind at ease. I scrub with the wash cloth given to me and dry off the plates once they are all cleaned. It wasn't that hard to do since I was used to sometimes washing certain dishes by hand. I put the last plate away and look over to where the fire place was. Thelma was knitting something and her husband and son had gone to bed, needing to wake up early for farming most likely. I go out to check on Grani who was curled up closer to the house this time, happily snoozing.

The more I look at him, the more I'm reminded of both my cat and dog. I bend down and rub his snout a little before heading back inside.

I ended up staying for a whole month, helping around the farm and practicing riding on Grani, despite not having reigns and a saddle. The riding part being a bit (Read: very) difficult since I was in a dress the whole time and I was worried about tearing my only set of pants. Needless to say, the first time left me in pain because of the rough scales chaffing my skin. .Want.

And while I was very leery about not having supports to keep me on Grani, I was slowly able to adjust being up in the air on the back of a wyvern, bareback-style. It was like learning how to canter on a horse for the first time; scary at first, then fun the next. Donnel helped out with my self-taught flight practice, making a makeshift harness and reigns ("How you reckon the reigns are put on?" "Wouldn't they be like a horse halter? Just… for wyverns?") for me out of rope on the grounds that I take him flying for a bit once I got better.

Needless to say, when I was able to make good on that promise he clung to me so hard I swore my head was going to pop off just by how hard he was squeezing my torso.

On the first day of the new month, I decided it was time for me to go. The family had given me a sack with some food and a pouch of money to take with me and to carry my clothes in, which I was grateful for but also got me nervous because now I had a debt. And debts, according to my dad, are the worst things a person can incur upon themselves.

"You don't need to pay us back Adrian," Thelma said to me gently.

"I—but—"

"She's right. You've been a big help around the farm, so consider this a gift as thanks."

So it's that kind of reciprocity? Okay, I can live with that…

Donnel steps forward (Now that I think about it, I never asked him why he wears a cooking pot on his head… I guess there's next time. Geez, I feel bad for thinking that.) to say his piece, "So you're really going?"

"Yeah, I think I've mooched off of you guys longer than I should have," I reply, rubbing the back of my neck as I did so. I bounced up and down on my feet, eager to go and yet very, very anxious. A month was not long enough to fully adjust to a situation like this. I could accept that I was in screwed up situation like this, but it didn't mean the rest of me did.

I fiddle with the end of my pony-tail, "So… thank you again for letting me stay. I'll be going now."

"Safe travels to you."

I nod my head in response to that and climb up onto Grani's back into a side saddle position. Once all the precautionary details were taken care of and everything was secured I clicked my tongue twice. Grani started flapping his wings and lifted the both of us off the ground. Once we were at a reasonable height, I steered him westward and we both took off.

The flight took us over the ocean and I could see the other side peeking over the horizon as a thin black streak. Contrary to the idle animations for the wyverns in-game they're actually very smooth gliders. Grani hasn't so much as flapped his wings more than twice to stay airborne once he hit the water.

Kinda makes me want to let go of the reins and spread my arms out. That would be fun. Unfortunately I'm too paranoid to let go of the reins so I settle for rolling my shoulders to get rid of some discomfort.

It felt like ages before we hit the mainland and a town popped up in the distance.

"Oh good," I mumble to myself, "Hey Grani, let's touch down."

A small screech comes from him and he begins to descend. I can feel my stomach drop as we go down but I bear with it.

Fwoomp. Grani's feet hit the ground and I had to brace my hands against him to keep myself from smacking my face on his spine. I free myself from the ropes and ease myself off and onto the grassy ground.

Wow, okay, I need to get my balance back. Once that was over with, I lead Grani by the ropes to the edge of the town and pause briefly. Would people run if I brought a flying lizard into the town?

…

Guess I'm just going to have to find out.

"C'mon," I murmur, picking up my pace again. Grani rumbles softly and follows my lead into the town. The reactions weren't as extreme as I thought, and I felt a little silly since wyverns aren't make-believe creatures in this world. At the most I got a few stares.

I look around the town, picking out different stores and identifying them: There was the blacksmith, the inn, the market, the church, the tailor's, and… the cobbler's, I think? I pace back and forth for a bit before heading for the tailor first.

I needed a new set of clothes, preferably something with pants.

Three hours later, I'm curled up outside of the inn feeling drained. The tailor had been extremely fussy when she was fixing up an outfit for me and I had felt my patience start to wear down with all of the poking and prodding she had done to me. That and she seemed to have an obsession with making sure everything complemented everything. Nothing wrong with that, but it just took too long for my liking.

Thankfully, buying a pair of boots was less painful.

So here I am now outside of the inn, dressed in a red long-sleeve shirt with the buttons positioned in a way that made the torso area look like a pea coat. The pants were brown and comfortable and the tailor had even thrown in a scholar's cape for me to wear that fastened at the neck.

My first thought at seeing myself in the outfit was: "Oh my god, I'm Raidou Kuzunoha."

I was just missing the hat.

"Geez," I hiss to myself when I look at what remaining money I had left. Five coins left. That wouldn't last me long.

Before I could start falling into a semi-panicked state, Grani gave a loud growl and his head was turned toward the main square. Naturally, I follow where he is directing his gaze is on. What I saw was a bunch of men, some wielding axes, spears, swords, and a few who looked like mages were spilling into the town and villagers were running.

Oh no.

I get to my feet and furiously stuff my belongings back into the bag given to me. I tie it to Grani and attempt to climb on when he suddenly takes flight, knocking me to the ground. It ended up being a good thing because a hand axe embedded itself where my head had been.

"Grawr!" Grani roared while dodging a thunder spell thrown at him. I scramble to my feet and wildly look around. Smoke was starting to rise from the fires that were being set and there was screaming and pandemonium happening. My hands shook; I was scared.

My eyes land on the hand axe that had almost killed me and I grab it, trying to pry it loose.

"Ugh! Come on!" My hands were starting to slip from sweat but I kept tugging. A woman ran past me screaming, "No, please, no!"

I turn my head and immediately regret it. I can see a brigand stalking my way, his face twisted into a horrible grin. His spear had some blood stains on it and it made my blood run cold. My tugs became more frantic and the hand axe finally gave away, making me stumble backwards a little.

I round on the spear-wielding brigand with my hand axe held in both of my hands. He looks at me like he's amused, clearly not viewing me as a threat.

"You should put that down before you hurt yourself, girlie."

I swallow thickly but don't let go of the hand axe, instead I start to back away and put distance between the two of us. He laughs and then charges at me. I sharply inhale out of fear and then—

Crash! "SHREEE!"

Grani had dropped down out of the sky and onto the spearman. My would-be killer screamed in agony from the crushing force of the wyvern and his spear clattered to the ground.

He didn't get back up after that.

I stand there shell-shocked and Grani nudging me was what snapped me out of it. I run and pick up the spear, trying not to look at the remains of the brigand while I took his discarded weapon.

"You damn beast!" One of the mages was charging up a spell. Thinking quickly, or not at all, I clumsily threw the hand axe at him. He dodged it, but it interrupted his spell and ended up gouging another one of his allies in the arm.

Yay for me.

I pull up onto Grani's back, bronze spear in hand, and hold on tight as we took to the air once more. It's weird how well I'm handling this but I can already feel weakness seeping into my being. To make matters worse, I had the entire bandit group focused on me.

Wonderful.

"Ah!" Grani suddenly banked harshly to avoid another spell, then again to avoid another hand axe. I couldn't grab the reins and had to trust Grani to fly us around while I held onto my only weapon and tried not to fall off.

"What are you cockroaches doing?! Kill that wench and her beast already!"

That aggravates me, "SCREW YOU, JACKASS!"

My outburst earned another hand axe aimed for me. I cried out in pain when it sliced my leg, giving me a flesh wound. Damn it, I just bought those pants!

Grani dove for one of the mages and stomped down on him like he had done with the spearman. The harsh landing rattled me and I grunted in response. His other buddy had frozen and that gave me an opening.

"Wha—"

I shifted the spear in my hand and thrust it forward. The tip sunk into the base of his neck and he howled in agony. His hands convulsed and flew at his neck and the tip left his body due to Grani taking off again, leaving the mage to writhe on the ground and bleed out.

Oh geez, I –I just killed someone. I *killed* someone.

I didn't have time to rationalize or be completely horrified because more hand axes were thrown our way. One whizzed past my head, making my heart almost stop, and another grazed my shoulder, leaving a stinging wound in its wake.

Toomanytoomanytoomany,ohgodI'mgoingtodieI'mgoingto die—

The bombardment suddenly stopped and I heard the sound of hooves beating the ground over the ringing in my ears.

"Gah!"

"Eeyargh!"

Pained screams came from the brigands as they began to drop like flies. I flinched at the sight of a thunder spell being sent flying, but it wasn't at me and Grani. It was at one of the axe men.

"Hey you!" I look down from over Grani's shoulder and feel my throat constrict at the familiar people who were below the both of us. My wyvern landed on the ground and I slipped off, only managing to soften the blow from futilely clawing at rough scales with my free hand.

"Ow!" Crap, I landed on my wounded leg. Wheezing, I try to pull myself up as three people approach me, Grani eyeing them carefully. I can only conclude that the battle was over with how no more battle cries were going on. That was surprisingly fast and yet it had felt like an eternity. There's nothing left but the smell of blood and smoke and I felt bile rise

up into my mouth.

"You're hurt!" the sprightly voice of Lissa hits my ears and I watch her, in a daze, pull out her staff and use it to heal up my admittedly light wounds. Robin (Oh hey, it's a guy) is looking at me with concern and Chrom is the one who addresses me, "Are you all right, miss?"

The timing couldn't have been any worse. I'm on the ground, in a sitting position with my knees tucked under me, and looking up at them like a deer in headlights without the wide-eyed look and Chrom asks me if I'm all right. What happens?

I fall forward and throw up on his boots.

FML.

Review, and please no flames.

I'm going to go bury myself in schoolwork now...

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Next chapter.

I don't own anything, 'cept my proxy self.

The surviving villagers all came out of their hiding places to see if the brigands were all dead and gone. Once that had been established, they set to work putting out the fires and salvaging anything they could. All of this, I heard and observed out of the corners of eye but my mind was focused on the fact of how ashamed I was feeling right now. After that little episode, I ran to a nearby grassy patch and dry-heaved until I could finally breathe without feeling the need to hurl anymore.

Of all the ways any first meeting could have gone I wish it hadn't gone like this.

I don't want to turn around and face them but I know I have to. So I gather whatever courage I can bring up and do just that.

"I'm sorry I threw up on you," that's the first thing out of my mouth. My eyes dart up at their faces for a millisecond before I'm staring at the ground and curling into myself. I'm not usually this guarded, but in this case I haven't had my rest and recovery period.

"Um… it's okay," Chrom is the one who says this.

"Are you feeling better now?" Lissa asks me. I nod my head and make a noise of affirmation while I dragged myself back to Grani and leaned on him for support. My heart wasn't slowing down fast enough for my own comfort but I could breathe properly so it counted for something.

"Milord," Oh that's right, you're here too Frederick. Why did I almost forget you? Eh, whatever. He glances at me with that super-serious expression of his and I lean into Grani's side a little bit more, my arms hugging the spear that I haven't let go of.

"This is the wyvern rider, then?"

"That's right."

I tune out of the conversation they're having briefly to rub Grani's head when he craned his neck in my direction. They talk with one another; Frederick still voicing his suspicions of Robin, Robin trying to assure him he wasn't lying about his amnesia, and Chrom speaking on Robin's behalf.

"-understand… And the wyvern rider?"

Welp, they're talking about me again. I try to look them in the eyes, but my own gaze keeps flitting this way and that and I know they know that I'm really nervous, if Frederick's face is any indication. Then again, that is always his normal expression whenever he shows up in the support conversations. Eesh, I can't stop shaking. A noise of discomfort comes from me and I swallow thickly.

"I'm sure she's an ally, Frederick. After all, she was fighting the brigands when we got here."

Fighting? I thought I was being the idiot who had drawn all the heat onto herself. Looks like we were gonna go through the introduction and recruitment dance… I think.

He asks for me name and I give it, "I'm Adrian."

"Isn't that a boy's name?" Lissa asks. I'm hard pressed to keep the snarkiness that somehow invades my tone whenever I explain things out of my voice and I manage, barely, "It's a gender neutral name."

"Oh," she looks surprised by this.

Frederick is still looking at me with that scrutinizing gaze, maybe if I put on my best pathetic look—no, I don't think that would work.

"Well met then, Adrian. I am Chrom, leader of the Shepherds (*Yes, I know who you are. Everyone who has played Awakening knows who all of you are.*), this is my little sister Lissa, Robin, and the stern-looking one is Frederick."

"Nice meet you—nice to meet you," whoops, stumbled there for sec. Aaannnd now Lissa is laughing at me and I feel my face heat up in embarrassment. Robin and Chrom are both smiling while Frederick is still in "stoic knight mode."

"Growr," Grani rumbles and I blink at him almost in confusion. He looks at me with one reptilian eye, "What?"

The eye blinks and then it clicks in my brain.

"Oh, right! This is Grani," wow, I feel like a dumbass right now. Today is just not my day is it? Grani makes a pleased noise and lowers his head in a greeting gesture. At least I think it's one.

"So this is a wyvern," Robin finally speaks up and he looks Grani up and down. Grani regards him briefly then snorts once and turns away. An elderly village man comes up and the actual dialogue in the game starts up. Thank you for saving us, we are so grateful, please let us repay, blah ,blah.

I really shouldn't be mocking this like I am but it's… difficult not to, especially when you play a lot of RPGs. Lissa whines to Frederick about not being able to stay and take them up on their hospitality, to which Frederick *finally* smiles and explains to her that they had to keep moving.

Come to think of it, now would be my chance to interject and beg to go with them. Although I'm going to have to be honest with them about my non-existent fighting abilities.

"Wait! Wait!" They all look at me and I took a deep breath, "Could I go with you guys? See, I'm a traveler and I don't have anywhere to go and my money is almost gone so…"

Please say yes, please say yes, please say yes.

"Is that so? Very well then." Yes! Thank you Walter—I mean Chrom! Of course, Frederick has to voice his suspicions and I really can't help but give him an annoyed look. I know he's doing his job and has to treat strangers with suspicion because he is protecting royalty, but come on!

"Milord, will your mind not at least heed council?"

"It does and I appreciate it, Frederick. But Adrian, like Robin, helped save Ylissean lives. The least we can do is grant her request."

Frederick sighs, "I understand. But I will be watching her, and Robin, closely."

"You don't have to," I mumble to myself, "I'd have to be stupid or clinically insane to challenge any of you to a fight."

"What was that?" Frederick turns back to me. I raise my voice, "I said you don't have to worry as I have very little combat experience."

Grani huffs and shifts on his feet beside me, eager to get moving. We start moving, leaving the town behind us and I try not to think of what is to come too much.

Night comes upon us soon enough and I hear night insects buzz and chirp all around us. Lissa continues to trudge along and she heaves a heavy sigh, "Ugh… We've been walking forever and now it's night and the bugs have come out! Noisy disgusting bugs that buzz around—"

I'm just going to try and tune out now. I look around at the darkness through the trees, feeling a bit unsettled. While I lived in the woods I always stayed close to home and now was usually the time I'd be showering and just doing things on the computer.

"Augh, bleh!" I hear Lissa splutter and spit out something that had flown into her mouth. We all stop and Chrom laughs good-naturedly, "Come on Lissa, hardship builds character."

But it doesn't always bring out the best in us Chrom.

"Want to help me gather firewood?"

"No thanks. I think I've had QUITE enough character building for one day!" our cleric stamps her feet. Robin is the next one to interject, "We should think about food too. I don't know about any of you but I'm starving."

Me too Robin. Me too.

"I'll go get some sticks," I said, feeling the need to contribute and turn to walk off, Grani following me. Finding the sticks

for kindling wasn't so hard since there were a lot lying about on the ground. Getting a good armful, I returned to the campsite and set the bundle down.

The fire was set and made and Chrom brought back a bear he had hunted down. We cooked it over the fire and I had to keep Grani from pouncing on the cooking chunks of meat. When it was done, all of us, minus Frederick, took our portions and started to eat.

Grani ate the slab I gave him with gusto and I looked down at mine. The smell was pungent and I couldn't help but make a bit of a face. I liked meat, don't get me wrong, but I'm pretty sure meat wasn't supposed to smell like this.

While I scrutinized my food and wondered how a simple campfire roast could something smell so disgusting, Chrom spoke up, "It's been a long time since I had bear meat. Delicious!"

Glad you think so.

"… What's wrong Lissa, Adrian? Aren't you both going to eat?" I only turned my gaze up to him for a bit while Lissa said her piece, "Pass! Gods, couldn't you spear us a normal animal people eat for once?! Who eats bear anyway?! You're messing with the food chain."

"There are probably lots of people who eat bear and you just don't know it," I point out to Lissa.

"But still…" Lissa glares at her meat, "Since when does meat smell like old boots?! Wait, I take that back—old boots smell better than this! You're with me on this, right Adrian, Robin?"

"Mmm…." I make a noise in the back of my throat and look over to Robin who is devouring his meal with much gusto. I look back down at my bear meat and hold my breath as I take a bite. The meat was tough and I tasted a faint smokey taste but other than that…

"It needs salt," I end up saying, "And maybe some pepper. Just more flavor in general."

The only blond in our group sighs sadly, as if my verdict was the same as me saying that I was on Chrom and Robin's side.

"Every experience makes us stronger, milady. Even the ones we find unpleasant," Frederick comes in with his words of wisdom. I nibble some more on my bear meat slab while listening to the conversation going on.

"Really? Then why don't I see YOU eating, Frederick?"

"Me? I… I had quite a large lunch," Frederick responded to her question. Liar. You are such a liar, Frederick. Is it that hard to say that you just can't stand the taste?

"Yeah right, Frederick!" Lissa scowls at him before looking back down at her food. She sighs in resignation and takes one bite, making a face the whole time, "Ick…"

"You can give it to Grani if you don't want it," I chime in. At the sound of my voice, Grani perked up and looked expectantly at the princess sitting to my right. She looked over at my wyvern and was quick to take my suggestion, "He can have it."

She tossed it over to him and snapped it up really quickly. I turn back to my meat and keep on eating. We finish up dinner and get ready for bed. I unclip my scholar's cape and turn it into a blanket for myself, Grani curling up on the ground around me. I close my eyes and start the long process of waiting for my mind to shut down enough for me to sleep.

I knew what was going to happen, but I wanted to at least get some sleep in before that. Of course, my period of sleep doesn't feel like enough before I'm rudely awoken by Frederick's horse shrieking and Grani moving. I sit up and rub my eyes with the heel of my right hand as I crawl out as quickly as I could.

Oh… I knew that it was bad in the game but, damn…

The forest was ablaze and smoke rose in a thick cloud above us. My hands fumbled a little as I tried to clip my cape back on.

"By the Gods…"

"Adrian! Could you fly up and see if you can find Chrom and Lissa?" Robin yells to me.

"Yeah, sure," I reply and attempt to pull myself up onto Grani's back, my spear in hand. Once on, I tied the ropes around my waist to keep me on and we take off. Once in the air, I look down below and feel my heart leap up into my throat. I

could see fissures and lava peeking out from within them along with the land being slanted in ways that it should not have been before.

All in all, it was a very hellish sight.

I couldn't help but cough and gag from the smell of the smoke; it was thicker than I was used too and I would normally be trying to get away from the vicinity of it. But my own discomfort aside, I still had Robin's request to do.

"Can you see them?" I ask the wyvern carrying me. Grani's response was to bank smoothly to the left and I managed to make out a few shapes through the trees along with a white color. Bingo. We flew back the way we came and I had to raise my voice, "THEY'RE OVER HERE!"

… Did they hear me—oh, wait, Robin is waving to me. Phew… That's a relief. Time to lead them to where they need to be and we can get the plot moving once more. But now this means that the Risen are here, along with Lucina….

I'm going to have to be extra careful and not call her by her actual name right now. I don't want to have to explain how I know who she really is; not right now… or ever…

Damn it, I can't be agonizing over being caught in my own lie when there is a horde of zombies below us that needs to be killed! Grani, descend please. We descend and Grani then starts flapping his wings to keep him hovering above the ground while Robin and Frederick burst from the underbrush.

"Milord, are you both all right?!"

"Yes!"

I could hear Robin talking from my left, "Are these creatures… common place in these lands?"

"Nope," was my reflexive reply. I had to restrain myself from slapping my face. Hard. Why did I have to give in to my urge and correct him?

"How can you be so sure?" Robin asks me, "You said you were a foreigner."

Think. Think. Think.

"When you travel on the road you hear a lot of things. And I have not heard any tales about these guys at all."

Nice save. Please take it.

"… If you're certain." Yes!

Through the haze the Risen start heading our way, their glowing eyes acting like two fireflies in the smoky gloom. It's really eerie and I can feel my arms tingle from how unnerved the sight was to me. It was like something out of a hellish nightmare and I was now right in the middle of it.

"Lissa, get behind us! Frederick, you and Chrom are the vanguard! Adrian, you give support," Robin started giving off orders at a rapid fire pace. Well, if the Tactician says so then I guess I had to go along.

…

And yet I don't feel so confident about this, mostly myself. I sigh and mutter, "You ready for this buddy?"

Grani snorts in response and I feel the rains tighten in my hands as he stretches his neck out a little. Frederick and Chrom have already moved to engage some of the Risen. I can't see what kind of units they are though. Lissa is somewhere hiding behind the tree line, no doubt taking cover in order to wait come out when we really need her without the Risen taking her out first. A little ways from me, Robin is throwing a thunder spell at a myrmidon Risen, charring it to a crisp.

A snarling hissing sound is my only warning before Grani flies us out of the path of a great axe that would've given both me and him a nasty gash. The Risen wielding it looks at us with those hollow eyes of his and comes at us again. I grip the bronze spear in my hand hold it at the ready with both hands.

I'm probably holding it wrong but whatever! I'm fighting for my life and I don't really care about technique right now! Grani moves us in back close and thrust it forward. It sinks into the Risen's shoulder. Not a fatal blow, crap!

Undeterred, he raises his axe again and I hastily yank the spear back out and Grani spins us around. I twist my upper

body around just in time to see that our opponent had been sent careening straight into a tree and onto the ground.

…. Oh. Oh, no, no, a body is not supposed to bend that way. Oh… I avert my eyes before I can start feeling sick again. A whistling noise flies through the air and my spear smacks harshly against my leg from a sudden force. I cry out and reach down to nurse the stinging area automatically. That's going to be really ugly bruise, if the arrow embedded into the wooden shaft is any indication. Oh great, so there's an archer targeting me. I'm at a major disadvantage with this match up.

"Come on, let's move," I try to steer Grani back to the others before the archer takes another shot. I can't even see him either, sneaky little bastard. Argh! This is so nerve-wracking! Grani shrieks and tries to elevate us when I feel something hit my back and I scream.

Pain like none other came from it and I almost whited out. Seriously, my entire vision just went white for a second.

Can't breathe. I need to breathe! Breathe, goddammit! I splutter and choke and I hear a muffled voice shouting something. There's the sound of drumbeats that breaks through the white noise I'm hearing right now and I feel something grab me. The pain intensifies again and my hands fly to grab the offending thing that is aggravating my wound even more along with a pained yelp.

"Calm down!"

"It HURTS!" Holy moly, does it hurt. My skin is pulled and it took way too long in my mind for whatever it was in my back to be removed. I wheeze and just focus on getting air back into my lungs when I feel a tingling sensation throughout my whole body. It was Lissa healing my wound.

"What… What got me?"

"You were hit by and arrow," Robin answers for me, holding the projectile in one hand. I growl and lean against Grani's spine with my forehead, "Stupid archer…"

They're going to be the bane of my existence in this world, aren't they? Hoof beats draw close to us and I see a woman in red armor with red hair atop a white horse, followed by a noble looking man. How nice of you to join us Sully, Virion.

At this point, I tune out the introductions and instead my attention wanders to the rest of the area. I could still see some Risen in the distance, and Chrom and Frederick aren't anywhere to be seen. But they'd be okay, Frederick's pretty OP in the beginning of the game after all.

"—got it?"

"Wait, I wasn't listening. What did you say?" I cringe a little at the look Robin gives me. He takes another breath, "I said that you should stick with Lissa and protect her in the back, and Virion will support you both."

Okay, I can deal with this. Sully rides past me, "Come on, less talking and more fighting!"

The silver-haired Tactician turns his attention back to the approaching swarm and he and Sully move in to intercept a few. So that just leaves me with Virion and Lissa. I hear the sound of Virion clearing his throat; I can guess where this is going.

"Adrian, was it? An unconventional name but it certainly has its own charm; you have nothing to fear while I am here."

And I don't doubt that. Now, I'm not one for interrupting other people but I couldn't help grimacing as he started laying the purple prose on thick, as he usually did with the female characters.

"Truly, for you are under the protection of a legend! The one who puts the "arch" in "archer!" None shall harm you while I am here."

…. I don't know whether to laugh or roll my eyes—oh, too late, I'm snickering. Virion sounds confused, "Why do you laugh, my dear lady?"

"Haha. I'm pretty sure you're not EMIYA."

"EMIYA?" the nobleman repeats the foreign name I had brought up. Lissa moves closer to Grani and looks up at me, "Who's EMIYA?"

"He—actually I'll tell you later, we have company."

Grani roars at the approaching Risen. Time to fight again. We rush forward when they came close enough and Grani snapped up one while I tried to lance another. The point went through one's face and it gave angry hisses, trying to dislodge my spear. I rip it out and Grani is on his way to mow down a few others.

Virion is at Lissa's side and firing his arrows at the ones that my wyvern and I don't engage. His aim was true and they went down after a few good shots. I get the last one with Grani's help and the battle appeared to be over.

"Phew," I put one hand over my chest to check my heart. It's racing again, man that would suck if I keeled over because of just being in this in these battles. Grani had a few wounds this time, but Lissa came over and took care of them with her healing stave, my wyvern nuzzling her in thanks.

The three of us go to find the rest of the group and we get there just in time to hear Lucina tell Chrom and the others, "This is just the prelude. You have been warned."

She does glance our way for a bit before heading off deep into the forest. I stare after her for a while as the plot progresses. A yawn comes from me and I cover my mouth. I really want to go back to bed.

"We need to hurry back to Ylisstol." Of course. No rest for the wicked and all that. We start moving again and I just let Grani lead while I closed my eyes and rested them. I don't when I fell asleep, but apparently I did.

In a rare moment, I went out like a light and was dead to the world.

End chapter.

Review.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

Next chapter's here. It's a little shorter than usual though, sorry about that.

There's a dull, persistent pain in my head and neck. My arms are stiff and sore beyond all belief too. Actually, my whole body is now that I think about it. And my throat is scratchy too; I don't think I've ever felt this bad in forever. Inhaling deeply, I right myself up and have to keep myself from falling over again with the sudden wave of vertigo.

"Finally awake?" I rub my eyes to get the heavy feeling to go away and I make a noise in the back of my throat in response to the question. Who was talking to me? I can't keep my eyes open, it's too bright. Maybe if I went and got some water—ack!

I had completely forgotten I was riding a flying lizard that was currently trudging along on the ground. And I still had the ropes tied around my waist so now I'm dangling upside down. Oh crap, my shirt!

Loud laughter is coming from somewhere close by, but I couldn't see because of my scholar's cape and I was too busy trying to keep my shirt from revealing more than anyone wanted to see to push it out of the way. Argh! Stop laughing at me whoever you are!

"So, Captain, where'd you pick this one up?"

Sully. I just settle for dangling there since my face was kept hidden this way. Chrom is saying something, but my mind is so preoccupied I can't make it out. I try to pull myself back up but the way my legs and body where positioned worked against me and I gave up after three tries.

"Do you need help, Adrian?" It's Robin who is asking me.

"Please?" I could really use it right now. I feel a pair of hands pushing me up and I'm able to re-adjust so I'm no longer hanging like the satchel on Grani's side. I mumble a "Thanks" and once again rub my eyes with a groan. I felt drained, hungry, and just really, really wanted a hot shower and to go back to bed right now.

Coughing a few times, I resigned myself to try and power through just how crappy I was feeling at the moment. In no time at all, we're at the entrance of Ylisstol and making our way into the city. I'd appreciate the scenery but I'm so stuck in my pain that I just can't.

Man, I'm pathetic.

"This is Ylisstol? There are so many people!" Robin exclaimed aloud. Glad someone is enjoying himself, though now that I'm not restricted by what the game had only been able to show due to how it was made I can actually see that there are a lot more people and that they all have very defined, very unique features to them.

Huh…

Grani kept his wings tucked close to his body as we continued onward and Frederick was saying this and that about the city. I don't know; I was more interested in the buildings on the far side of Ylisstol.

"—but wait that would make you and Lissa…!"

Looks like Robin found out that Chrom and Lissa were the prince and princess. Wait, Emmeryn's escort has appeared?! Snapping out of my daze, I couldn't help but look around wildly before I managed to get a glimpse of the Exalt's entourage before they had disappeared behind the corner. I felt disappointed that I had missed it. Actually, I've missed a lot of stuff since I was so inclined to spacing out. I rub my eyes with the back of my hand and groan again.

"Adrian, come on! We're going to the palace!" Lissa is waving me over to them. I hear Sully say something about meeting up with them at the barracks and she and Virion are off. Grani snorts a little and carries me all the way to the entrance gates of the castle.

Holy—it's huge. I've never been to an actual castle so this should be interesting.

"Ma'am, your wyvern has to stay outside."

Oh yeah. I fiddle with the knots and my fingers slip a few times before the rope comes undone and I'm allowed to ease myself off of Grani's back. Naturally, my knees felt like jelly and I stumbled like a foal still learning how to walk.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah," my balance regained and assuring the others I could walk on my own now, I left Grani with the guards outside and kinda had to jog to catch up with the others when I started lagging behind them. We make our way down the halls that are rather plain with there not being a lot of portraits or draperies, or what have you. I guess it'd make sense considering the kind of person Emmeryn is. She never seemed to be the extravagant type.

Entering the throne room, Robin and I were the last ones to enter and Emmeryn was there with a pale-haired woman; Phila?

"Welcome home Chrom, Lissa, Frederick," she addresses them warmly. It was at this moment that my logic had to come rushing in and remind me that she was going to die in the future. Having that reminder sink its claws into my mind made me shift on my feet and I had trouble keeping my nervousness in check. It only made it worse when Phila turned her gaze onto me causing me to fold my arms and close in on myself.

The conversation went on as expected. "Was everything all right?" Yes it was. Something, something, Plegia—

"Ah, yes. You speak of your new companions here?"

Both Robin and I suddenly found ourselves at the center of attention and I had to force myself to not think about the eyes that were on me.

"Yes. These two are Robin and Adrian. They helped us drive off a bandit attack on one of the towns and I have decided to make them Shepherds," Chrom explained to her. A radiant smile graces Emmeryn's face as she speaks to the both of us, "From the sound of it, it seems that Ylisstol owes the both of you a debt of gratitude."

"Not at all, milady!" Robin nearly yells. He's just as nervous as I am, I realize. I, on the other hand, just nod and look down at my feet. Because I'm pretty sure all I did was be the moron who painted a target on their back. They go on talking and I tune out a little, focusing on the other surrounding area. This was a really beautiful looking place. Too bad the game never showed the entirety of it. I hear Frederick bring up his suspicions regarding Robin and his claim about amnesia and it's pretty much the same song and dance as in the game. Although they do bring up me and that I was a simple traveler who was also a wyvern rider. Feeling a yawn coming I turn my head away and cover my mouth out of politeness but the action irritates my already scratchy throat and I start coughing.

Lissa is suddenly beside me and she looks concerned, "You okay, Adrian?"

"Yeah," I cover another cough, "Yeah, I just have a bit of a sore throat." Being around smoke from a fire and accidently breathing in some can do that and it's not fun. Lissa keeps looking at me and I continue, "It's not bad, I promise."

"If you're sure. Anyway, come on, there's a place I want to show you and Robin!" She takes me by the arm and starts running off, dragging me with her. Robin follows behind us and I have to prevent myself from tripping over my feet.

Welp, to the barracks we go.

I'm not quite sure what happened after we got to the barracks because I had started to fall asleep again at some point. I remember exiting the palace and suddenly being hit in the face with sunlight had just sapped my energy for whatever reason. Meh. I open my eyes to find myself in a bed and my scholar's cape once gain acting as a blanket. Also the dryness in my throat was even more prominent now and it hurt to swallow.

Today was not a good day.

And to top it all off I was starving. Though I couldn't wallow in the misery forever (I'd hate that with the burning passion of a thousand suns because I like feeling at least content!), as the door opened to Lissa walking in with who I am just now recognizing as Maribelle.

"You're finally awake!" she said to me, "How are you feeling?"

"Hungry," my voice was really rough, "And I could use some water."

Taking another breath irritated my throat and I had to turn away when I started coughing. Damn, so it hadn't gone away. At least it was less painful this time when I swallowed again. When I looked back Maribelle was making a bit of a face. Did I really look that terrible? Lissa spoke again, catching my attention once more, "All right! I'll go get some food and water for you then!"

"Lissa, darling, you really do not have to do such a thing."

Maribelle, I know you are a nice person underneath all of that posh but I have decided I really, really do not want to be around you right now. Having regained enough strength to pull myself out of bed, I do exactly that and stand, "No, it's okay. I can go myself, though could you tell me where I need to go?"

"If you're sure. I can actually just lead you there," she makes a motion for me to follow and I do. Of course, Maribelle follows the two of us to where the food is. I couldn't have been any more happier about finally having some food in my belly and water to soothe my esophagus. Thank you, Lissa, you are a saint.

While I inhaled the food I had acquired for myself, apparently that was the moment the entirety of the Shepherds decided to come flooding in.

"He-ey! So you're finally awake, girly," Sully says to me. I ended up glowering at her and she just laughed in response.

"How are you feeling?"

"I'm feeling better," I reply to Robin's question. He nods his head to me and then Vaike pushes forward to get in a few words and introduce himself. After him was Sumia, and I think I see Kellam behind her. Poor guy, he's so big and yet no one notices him. Once everyone had gotten their chances to tell me their names (even though I already knew them), Frederick and Chrom appeared within the room.

"Captain!" Sumia moved forward and then SMACK! Down she went. I managed to spot a few pieces of paper flutter to the ground and it was then I took notice of all of the sheets scattered around the place. What the-? Who would even do something like this and why hasn't anyone bothered to pick them up?

"Sumia?! Is it your boots again?" I pin the prince with an incredulous look, one that he does not notice. Chrom, do you not see the state of the floor? The Pegasus Knight gets to her feet and is very flustered if the way her cheeks are say anything, "No—I mean yes! I… ohhh."

Poor Sumia.

Lissa walks over to her brother and asks the question that will start the chain of events, "So what did you talk about with Emm?"

That's right; the Shepherds will be heading north to get that alliance with the Khans. Chrom's entire demeanor becomes much more serious and it was clear there was serious business afoot. All of us had our eyes on him, waiting to hear what he had to say.

"All right, listen everyone; a week from now we will be marching to Regna Ferox."

Robin speaks up, confusion lacing his voice, "Regna Ferox?"

Luckily enough for him, Sumia was there to fill him in on what Regna Ferox was, "A unified country to the north inhabited by barbarians, or so it is said."

"Barbarians is a little bit harsh, don't you think?" I mutter to myself.

"What?"

"Nothing."

"They are warriors, and warriors are what we need to quell this new menace," Chrom catches all of our attentions once more, "Normally, the Exalt would be the one to personally put forth this request but given the recent events…"

You don't want your sister in to be put anymore danger than she already is.

He picks up from where he had trailed off, "Well, it's for the best that she remains here with the people. Therefore, the task has fallen to us."

Of course…

"This mission will be strictly voluntary, so if any one of you wish to stay behind—"

Lissa raises her hand, "I volunteer to go!"

"You're gonna want ol' Teach with you on this one!"

"I volunteer as well. What? I've been here the whole time."

I reiterate once more: poor Kellam. Though Sumia's current feelings are a perfect mirror of mine only I have no training whatsoever. Sumia knows how to properly handle the use of a spear and I don't. All I really have is Grani but I can't keep relying on him for everything.

That would just get me and him killed faster.

I push that back down and decide it is better that I stick close to the group. I'm pretty sure that's all I really can do right now. And I'm sure I'll get better at… defending myself. And Grani needs a proper saddle and reins now that I'm thinking about it.

Looks like I'm going to be very busy from now on.

Six days into the preparation week and I'm ready to fall over and not get up ever again. Since I was, for lack of a better word, a liability in my current state one of the other Shepherds had taken it upon themselves to train me. No, not Frederick and his infamous Fitness Hour but Sully wasn't really that much better. I swear she's trying to kill me; death by exercise. My mom would be disappointed in me.

"Come on, girly! Keep up the pace!"

"Mmrgh…" I can only make a noise and try to speed up as Sully is running just ahead of me. Of course, I close the distance just a smidgen before lagging back even further this time. I can hear her snort and she slows down when we reach the gate to the barracks.

"Haha, well it looks you're improving even if you're still wearing that pathetic face at this point."

Back-handed compliment much? I don't even respond to it. Rather, I head straight for a nearby water barrel and dunk my head in without ceremony. The water felt good but I couldn't relish it for long since my lungs were still protesting and I needed air. After a while, I have enough oxygen back that I can lean back down and start drinking. Though after what didn't feel like enough time for me to get enough water back into my system Sully comes on over and starts to pull me away.

"Break's over, time to work on your spear training," she says. This time my groan is louder and she hears it.

"Ah, quit complaining. You'll survive."

I'm starting to have my doubts actually. We reach the training grounds that are empty so it's just the two of us. She lets go of me to go grab two training spears from the weapons rack and throws one to me which I clumsily catch.

Just a little longer then it will all be over. I have to remind myself of this while adjusting the spear in my hands to hold it properly like Sully had shown me on the first day of her training me. While I'd be on my own with mounted combat since I was quick to learn that Ylisse had little to no wyvern riders in their military at least I'd be able to be a bit better with my spear.

"Oi, pay attention! And move your hands apart a little more!"

I do exactly as she tells me to and we begin. Just a little longer…

When Sully finally lets me go I make it about four steps before I decide 'screw it' and choose to flop down onto the ground.

Ow, ow. No more, just leave me here to die.

I hear the sound of another person gasping for air somewhere nearby as well as dirt crunching underfoot. Oh, who was it now?

"Adrian? Are you okay?" Robin.

"No," I wheeze and cough, breaking the word up pretty badly. In fact, I don't think it was a word at all than just another intelligible garble that sometimes comes from me. I somehow managed to push myself up on wobbly arms so I was up again. He's looking at me with a sympathetic expression, "Dare I ask what happened?"

"Sully happened." That pretty much speaks for itself. The tactician nods his head in comprehension, "Ah. I would say that you're lucky for not having to attend Frederick's Fitness Hour, but now I'm not sure."

"How about we agree they're both horrible?" I ask tiredly and get a good look at him. Red-faced, disheveled, and probably as exhausted as I am from the looks of it. We can be suffering buddies, yay. He makes a noise of agreement and we descend into awkward silence.

"…."

"….."

"….."

"… Um…"

Let it be known that I am a sub-par conversation starter, "I'm hungry."

Robin looks a bit startled from my sudden remark but is quick to collect himself. He smiles, though it looks a little awkward, "Now that you mention it, it is getting rather close to dinner time."

Really? Oh thank goodness. I get up to my feet and sway a little. Whoa, shaky legs.

"Oh good." And I'm off towards the mess hall, Robin right behind me. We don't talk on the way there and I'm quick to go off on my own, grab my food and get out eat with Grani. The Shepherds aren't bad people, far from it, but I feel incredibly awkward being around them longer than I have to. That and I could easily give away that I know things about them they haven't told me, as far as their concerned anyway.

I find Grani outside of the stable area where the other war animals are and he perks up when I come close. He nuzzles me and I kinda rub my head back against his before sitting down at his side and digging into my food. Grani licks up whatever scraps and left over sauce was on my plate when I set it down and I start to reflect on my current situation.

I was a Shepherd now and the plot was going to progress again starting tomorrow. I begin sorting through my memories of the game. Tomorrow would be the ambush by the Risen, and then after would be snow, cold, and another battle. And then after that was the Coliseum, and then after *that*—

I sigh and rub my face. And I just remembered I had no idea or plan of action of my own beyond following the game like a dog on a leash. Which brought up the conundrum of do I want to interfere in anything?

I feel my stomach sink and I frown a little. If I interfered… if I interfered would I make things worse? I could screw things up even more and even if I had the capacity to carry out whatever spur-of-the moment plan I made would it even be the right thing to do?

Emmeryn needed to die so Ylisse could win the war with Plegia. This was a fact. A sick feeling overcomes me and I feel immensely guilty; I'm thinking of all of this like I would when I opened up my 3DS to play this game when just physically being here should have been enough to get into my head that I can't see these people as polygons on a screen anymore.

This isn't a game anymore.

"Waugh!" A sudden harsh bump pushes me over and I roll over, "Grani?!"

He looks at me with this odd look that I can't identify and starts licking me. I make a face and bring up my arms to push him away.

"Stop! Stop, Grani!"

At least his tongue isn't rough like a cat's. That'd be bad. I squeak and splutter when he doesn't let up though and give him a hard push. Sitting up, I wipe my face and level him with an annoyed look. I swear he's smiling at me and I give into the urge to smack him.

He makes this weird noise and I don't know what to make of it.

"You're awful," I grouse. Grani does this shaking thing with his head and noses me. Though I don't feel as upset anymore. So it counts for something, I guess. Whether or not Grani had been trying to cheer me up or was just being a wyvern, it had actually done wonders for my mood. But I sober up again when I remembered what I had been thinking about; the future.

… Maybe… maybe I should just wait and see. Yes, I should probably do that for now. No sense in having a breakdown

right now. And if I want to get home, I'm going to have to keep it together. Don't breakdown now, Adrian.

And I'm not alone. I have Grani, the only one I can comfortably share my secret with me.

Edit: Okay, sorry about that folks. After I originally posted this chapter I had actually been dissatisfied with parts of the original and I didn't think you guys would've appreciated some of the things I originally had in this chapter. But now this should be better. Still, I apologize.

As always, read and review.